bio-ethanol and other bio-fuels). The draft National Policy on Bio-Fuels has been referred to a Group of Ministers (GoM).

Increase in prices of milk and its products

*28. SHRI RAJ NATH SINGH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) what are the reasons for increase in the prices of milk and milk products day-by-day;

(b) whether Government have any plan to control the prices of these items which are commonly used items; and

(c) whether there is any plan to decrease the prices of milk and milk products?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (c) Prices of milk and milk products are increased by the producers/manufacturers as and when there is increase in production costs. Government regularly reviews the availability of milk and milk products in the country.

The prices of milk and milk products are fixed by the producers/manufacturers. However, the Government constantly monitors the price of milk and milk products.

Schemes for agricultural productivity

*29. SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA:
SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister's announcement that the farm sector programme will be implemented and is working on a new Rs. 25,000 crore farm sector programme to be implemented by States for increasing agricultural production and productivity;

(b) if so, whether details of the schemes have been finalized and announced;

(c) if so, what are the details of the same; and

(d) whether the Planning Commission is also working with his Ministry for implementing a new additional central assistance scheme to be provided to the States for implementing the farm sector programme?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) Yes, Sir. The Government has formulated an Additional Central Assistance (ACA) Scheme, namely, the "Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY)" with an envisaged allocation of Rs. 25,000 crore during the XIth Five Year Plan.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d) The broad objectives of RKVY are, *inter-alia*, to: (i) incentivize the States so as to increase public investment in agriculture and allied sectors; (ii) achieve the goal of reducing the yield gaps in important crops through focused intervention; (iii) maximize returns to the farmers in agriculture and allied sectors; and (iv) bring about quantifiable changes in the production and productivity of various components of agriculture and allied sectors by addressing them in a holistic manner.

The States would be eligible to access the ACA for taking up schemes in agriculture and allied sectors under the RKVY scheme provided they prepare District and State Agriculture Plans and ensure that the baseline share of expenditure in agriculture and allied sectors in the total State's Plan expenditure is at least maintained. The States have been provided flexibility and autonomy in the process of selection, planning, approval and execution of schemes under the agriculture and allied sector. The ACA would be made available to the States as 100% grant. The operational guidelines for implementation of RKVY Scheme have been finalized in consultation with the Planning Commission and issued to the States/Union Territories.

Minimum support price for paddy and wheat

*30. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN:
SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether minimum support price for paddy and wheat has been announced;

(b) if so, whether the minimum support price for paddy is less than wheat;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps taken to increase the minimum support price for paddy?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. The Minimum Support Price (MSP) of paddy for 2007-08 crop season was announced/fixed on 17th May, 2007. Accordingly, the MSP of Paddy (Common) was fixed at Rs. 645 per quintal and of paddy (Grade A) at Rs. 675 per quintal. Subsequently, for paddy an incentive bonus of Rs. 50 per quintal has been announced by the Government on 9th October, 2007 over and above the MSP. The MSP of wheat for 2007-08 crop season was announced on 9th October, 2007 whereby it was fixed at Rs. 1000 per quintal.

The Government decides on the support price for various agricultural commodities taking into account the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP), the views of Central Ministries as well as such other relevant factors which are considered important for fixation of support prices.

The CACP, while formulating its recommendations on price policy considers a number of important factors which include cost of production, changes in input prices, input/output price parity, trends in market prices, demand and supply situation, inter-crop price parity, effects on industrial cost structure, general price level and on cost of living; international market price situation and parity between prices paid and prices received by the farmers.

Economic plan/package for farmers

*31. SHRI O.T. LEPCHA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any specific economic plan/package for farmers in the country,

(b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;

(c) the details of funds provided or proposed to be provided for the purpose during the last three years and the current financial year; and

(d) the detials of achievements made in this respect?